

Office of Public Information

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MEET THE LADIES: SALEM COUNTY CELEBRATES WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

(SALEM, NJ)—Deputy Freeholder Director Beth Timberman today announced that a number of historical programs will be presented throughout the month of March in observance of National Women's History Month.

"Eight organizations have joined forces to present an amazing array of programs that highlight the heritage and achievements of Salem County women over three centuries," said Freeholder Timberman. "A talented group of reenactors, performers, storytellers and actors will be featured at locations across the County."

National Women's History Month can trace its beginnings to 1909, when International Women's Day was first observed, but the modern observation of Women's History month didn't begin until Congress established National Women's History Week in 1981. Six years later, the week was extended to the entire month of March, Congress passing a resolution and the President issuing a proclamation every year ever since.

This year in Salem County residents and visitors can enjoy and learn from a rich variety of offerings. Historical societies in Penns Grove, Pennsville, Salem and Woodstown are all presenting living history programs in which actors will be portraying women of accomplishment from Salem County history, from African-American poet Hetty Saunders to the beloved Woodstown educator, Mary Shoemaker. In addition, the Nanticoke-Lenni Lenape Tribe will be offering a special program featuring storytelling and dance at the historical Society of Penns Grove, Carneys Point and Oldmans. Reenactors will portray 18th and 19th century domestic life at two locations in Lower Alloways Creek, while the AAUW is offering a traditional tea in Woodstown. The month concludes with a rare opportunity to visit the Alliance Heritage Center in Pittsgrove to enjoy an exhibition focusing on great Jewish women.

"This coordinated program schedule grew out of the Cultural & Heritage Commission's History Roundtable," said Freeholder Timberman. "The Roundtable brings together representatives from all the County's history organizations to discuss issues of mutual interest and to explore opportunities for joint programming and promotion."

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Many of the programs are being offered free to the public. A complete program listing follows, and is also at www.salemcountyni.gov, "Top Stories."

Program Schedule

Saturday & Sunday, March 14-15

Women in History in Pennsville and Penns Grove 1:00-4:00 pm

Historical Society of Penns Grove, Carneys Point and Oldmans, 48 West Main St., Penns Grove

Information: (856) 299-1556; www.pennsgrovehistory.com

Pennsville Township Historical Society, Church Landing Farm, 86 Church Landing Rd.,

Pennsville

Information: (856) 678-4453; www.pvhistorical.njcool.net

The Historical Society of Penns Grove, Carneys Point and Oldmans (HSPGCPO) and the Pennsville Township Historical Society (PTHS) are joining forces to present a weekend of living history at both locations.

On Saturday, HSPGCPO invites you to meet Rev. Mary Spencer, founder of Mt. Olivet Church in Penns Grove, portrayed by Rebecca Brooks, and Miss Rena Leap, poet, civic leader and Sunday School Teacher portrayed by Jackie Zane. PTHS is featuring "Women Who Were Educators," all members of the Joseph Wright family, portrayed by Donna Litvin, Janice Walton, and Judith Archer. And the Nanticoke-Lenni-Lenape Indian Tribe will present a program here featuring dancing and storytelling.

On Sunday the program continues in Penns Grove featuring Rose Pelura, local businesswoman and well-known leader of the community, portrayed by her daughter, Darlene Maxwell, and Mrs. Arete Johnson Russell, the first woman licensed Pharmacist in New Jersey, portrayed by Brenda Bevis. Meanwhile in Pennsville, Mary Herz will offer the inspiring story of Mary Sanderlin, educator, principal and author of *Stories of Lower Penns Neck* and Grace Alliegro will portray Frances Langley, a well known woman in the community who worked for her brother W.D. Acton who owned the park and co-authored *River Beach Park Grew From Old Hotel*.

Thursday, March 19

Women in History 7:00 pm

Union Presbyterian Church, 254 Shell Rd., Carneys Point Information: (856) 299-1556; www.pennsgrovehistory.com

The Historical Society of Penns Grove, Carneys Point and Oldmans continues its exploration of local women's history.

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Sunday, March 22

Domestic Life in the 18th Century at the Hancock House 12 noon-4 pm

Hancock House State Historic Site, 3 Front St., Hancock's Bridge

Information: 856-935-4373

Reenactors will provide insights into the daily lives of women in South Jersey in the 18th Century, demonstrating meal preparation on the hearth and homespun textile processing. Donation. Information: 856-935-4373;

www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/historic/hancockhouse/hancockhouse-index

Open Hearth Cooking at the Historical Log Cabin 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Lower Alloways Creek Historical Log Cabin, 736 Smick Rd., Canton

Information: (856) 935-6691

An assortment of foods will be prepared in the Cabin's fireplace.

Wednesday, March 25

Meet Miss Mary Shoemaker, 7:30 pm

Pilesgrove-Woodstown Historical Society, 42 N. Main St., Woodstown Information: (856) 769-4588; www.historicwoodstown.org/hist-soc.html

The Society is proud to present a living history program focusing on Woodstown's beloved school principal and community leader, Mary Shoemaker, portrayed by Anne Buckwheat in the historic Eldridge's Hill Schoolhouse behind the Society's Museum.

Saturday, March 28

Women's History Tea 11:30 am

Woodstown Friends Annex, 104 N. Main Street, Woodstown.

Information: (856) 769-1595

The American Association of University Women is presenting a tea luncheon featuring a presentation of women's daily life 200 years ago. Fee.

Honoring Hetty Saunders 2:00 pm

Salem County Historical Society, 83 Market St., Salem

Information: (856) 935-5004; www.salemcountyhistoricalsociety.com

Esther "Hetty" Saunders was born enslaved, escaping to live as a free woman of color in Salem County before the Civil War. She is remembered today as a poet, her complete works published by the Society recently.

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This program begins at the Friends Burial Ground, West Broadway, Salem, by unveiling the New Jersey Women's History Trail historical marker here where she is buried.

The program continues at the Society's museum, 83 Market Street, at 2:30 p.m. as Ms. Shirley Barnes will present a first-person interpretation of Saunders' poetry.

Sunday, March 29

Great Jewish Women 11 am - 3 pm

Alliance Heritage Center, 973 Gershal Ave., Alliance, Pittsgrove Information: (856) 696-4445; www.jewishcumberland.org

The Jewish Historical Society of Rural Southern New Jersey is presenting a special exhibition profiling great Jewish women in history and from the Alliance Colony - a special opportunity to visit this remarkable site.